DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 584 JC 870 499

AUTHOR Rice, Gary
TITLE College of DuPage District 502 Educational Needs Assessment (Total Sample Summary).
INSTITUTION College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Ill.
PUB DATE Jun 87
NOTE 36p.; Summary of a survey conducted by the Gallup Organization.
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Choice; *College Role; *Community Attitudes; Community Colleges; Community Surveys; *Educational Attitudes; *Educational Needs; Information Sources; Social Attitudes; Transfer Programs; Two Year Colleges; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

In spring 1987, the Gallup Organization conducted a telephone survey for the College of DuPage (COD) in Illinois to determine community perceptions of the college's role in the community; community awareness of COD and its competitors; perceptions of current college services; importance of factors in selecting an educational program; interest in attending an educational program; obstacles to attending COD; vocational and career interests; sources of information about COD; preferred delivery systems, schedule, location, and format; and rating of COD on various factors. Survey findings, based on responses from 1,513 District 502 residents, included the following: (1) the functions rated as most important for community colleges were "prepare to transfer" and "provide vocational training," though half of the respondents saw COD as a place to earn transfer credit and only 13% saw it as a place to obtain a two-year college occupational degree or certificate; (2) 43% of the respondents indicated that some member of their household had taken courses at COD; (3) the most frequently given reason for choosing COD or one of its competitors was "convenient location"; and (4) 66% of the respondents indicated that career-related continuing education was important to them. (UCM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED288584

College of DuPage District 502

Educational Needs Assessment

(Total Sample Summary)

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. RICE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Survey Conducted By
The Gallup Organization

Summary Prepared By
Gary Rice

Office of Research and Planning
College of DuPage

June 1987

JC 870499

Acknowledgments

We wish at this time to express special and personal thanks to the following groups for their contributions to the successful completion of this project.

First, the philosophical and financial commitment provided by the C.O.D. Board of Trustees, President McAninch and the Cabinet set the stage and was essential to its completion.

Second, to the Gallup organization, represented by Don Deluca and Margaret Petrella, who provided considerable expertise in incorporating our wishes into the survey design and conducted the actual survey with professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally, and most importantly, our gratitude to each member of the Needs Assessment Steering Committee:

David Boyd
Mary Buckley
Bernard Fradkin
Ron Keener
Mark Pfefferman
Herb Rinehart
Bea Schubert
Marlene Stubler
Gene Wagner

They put in considerable time and effort and paid attention to the detail which was essential to insure that every question was obtaining valuable information and addressing the topics deemed important to the college. They did their job well as evidenced by feedback from the Gallup Organization and the ease with which the returns created a mosaic of very worthwhile information. Our thanks to each of you.

Ron Lemme
Gary Rice

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgments	
Introduction	1
Project Objectives/Topics	1
Statistical Caveats	2
Sample Characteristics	3
Summary Findings	5
1. Perceptions of the college role(s) in the Community	5
2. Community awareness of COD and its competitors	6
3. Perception of current college services	11
4. Importance of factors when selecting an educational program	11
5. Interest in attending an educational program	14
6. Obstacles to attending COD	18
7. Vocational and career interests and need for a career-oriented program	19
8. Sources of information about the college	19
9. Preferred delivery systems, schedule, location, format	24
10. Rating COD on various factors e.g., quality of instruction, use of services, meeting educational needs, etc.	27
Conclusion	30

LIST OF TABLES

No	Title	Page
1	Community College Functions (%)	5
2	Community View Of COD (%)	6
3	Familiarity With COD (%)	7
4	Ever Taken Course AT COD (%)	7
5	Household Member Enrolled At COD (%)	8
6	Reasons For Choosing COD (%)	10
7	Reasons For Choosing Competitor (%)	10
8	Used/Attended COD Activities And Services (%)	11
9	Main Reason For Considering College (%)	12
10	Factors Influencing College Selection (%)	13
11	Main Reasons For Continuing Education At COD (%)	14
12	Any College/Trade Courses In Recent Past (%)	15
13	Likelihood Of College Attendance Within Five Years (%)	15
14	Most Likely Location To Take Courses (%)	16
15	Likelihood Of Attending COD (%)	16
16	Initial Study Field (%)	17
17	Obstacles To Attend Cod (%)	18
18	Importance Of Continuing Education To Career (%)	19
19	Main Sources Of Local News (%)	20
20	Newspaper Sources For Local News (%)	21
21	Radio/Television Sources For Local News (%)	22
22	Information Sources About COD (%)	23
23	Former Enrollee Field Of Study (%)	24

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

No	Title	Page
24	Location Of Courses - Former Enrollee (%)	25
25	Awareness Of Off-Campus Courses (%)	25
26	Location Convenience Of Off-Campus Courses (%)	26
27	Course Day And Time Preference (%)	27
28	Course Challenge Level (%)	28
29	Evaluation Of COD (%)	29

Introduction

A series of college-wide discussions about a service area needs assessment culminated in August '86 when the Cabinet authorized the conduction of this project. At the outset it was acknowledged that outside expertise and assistance would be needed, but all project decisions would ultimately be made by the college. In September a Needs Assessment Steering Committee was formed under the co-chairmanship of Ron Lemme and Gary Rice. They were charged with developing the project purposes, goals, designs, and outcome. Once developed they were to recommend the outside consultant for Cabinet and Board approval.

About mid-November requests for proposals containing the project topics, decision questions, and general design limits were sent out to well-known national polling firms. Upon receipt of proposals and interviews with leading firms the committee recommended the Gallup Organization be hired as consultant to actually conduct the phone survey of District 502 residents. The Board accepted the recommendation in late January 1987. Between then and mid-March the committee jointly developed the actual survey and selected the sampling method. From that point Gallup conducted the phone interviews. A draft of their findings was reviewed by the Steering Committee in early June.

The project reached closure at the June '87 Board meeting when the Gallup Organization presented a final report to the Board and college administrators. They also provided statistical summaries by previously defined sub-groups and computer tapes of actual data which the college will use for additional analysis.

Project Objectives/Topics

The underlying purpose of the entire project was to obtain community perceptions about the college image and information for making sound marketing decisions. With that context the Steering Committee defined 10 major topics around which most decision issues in these areas centered. These topics were weighted and prioritized within the survey in terms of the scope and urgency of obtaining necessary information. They are presented below:

Perceptions of the college role(s) in the community

Community awareness of COD and its competitors

Perception of current college services

Importance of factors when selecting an educational program

Interest in attending an educational program

Obstacles to attending COD

Vocational and career interests and need for a career-oriented

Sources of information about the college

Preferred delivery systems, schedule, location, format

Rating COD on various factors e.g., quality of instruction, use of services, meeting educational needs, etc.

These topics have significant overlap since they are all related to identifying and analyzing both current and potential clienteles. This will be more in evidence as the findings are analyzed. In many instances a particular table will concurrently fit, with equal facility, in several categories. The best way to read this summary is to scan it first to obtain an overview. Then return to reflect in more detail upon the topic of particular interest.

Statistical Caveats

The Gallup Organization polled 1513 District 502 residents. They were selected using a zip code table from the COD service area. The sampling was done in such a manner to insure representativeness throughout the entire district as well as the three major Open Campus regions. Once the responses were obtained Gallup assigned a relative weighting to make sure the computed percentages would reflect the most current information about the population demographics. Therefore, all summary tables will report the total number responding and the weighted percentages. This means that one cannot directly obtain the absolute number answering any single item by multiplying the total N by the percentage. Rather it says 'this is what the population would most likely have responded if they had all been polled'.

As a corollary it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error since only a portion of the population actually responded. The size of such error depends largely on the size of the sample; the larger the sample the smaller the error. Although the sampling error also varies slightly depending upon the size of the obtained percentage this summary reports a single value with each table. It takes into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. It is interpreted as the range (plus or minus the number shown) within which the reported percentage could be expected to vary 95 times out of 100 assuming everything was done the same way each time.

To give a specific example look at Table 1. The total N = 1513 and S.E. = $\pm$ 3. This is saying that it is very probable any reported percentage in this table would fall somewhere between 3 points above to 3 points below this value 95 percent of the time. Further, the reported value is the most likely true figure.

This summary only reports findings for the entire sample. Additional summaries will be prepared to profile subgroups of this sample such as major region, length of residence, etc. Each time the total sample is broken down the sampling error increases so this summary represents the most accurate portrayal of District 502.

Sample Characteristics

To provide context this section reports the biographic/demographic characteristics of the total sample. The percentage has been weighted by Gallup to reflect the entire district 502 population proportion. Likewise, all tables should be read as showing what percent of the 800,000 residents would respond to the question.

DEMOGRAPHICS

SEX	%
MALE	48
FEMALE	52
TOTAL	100

REGION	%
NORTH	43
EAST	24
SOUTHWEST	33
	100

RACE	%
WHITE	94
NON-WHITE	6
	100

AGE	%
18-24	16
25-34	24
35-55	39
56+	20
	100

EDUCATION	%
COL GRAD/POST	27
SOME COLLEGE	31
H.S. GRAD	36
LESS THAN H.S.	6
	100

LENGTH RESIDENCE	%
3 YEARS OR LESS	35
4-10 YEARS	27
MORE THAN 10 YEARS	38
	100

EMPLOYMENT	%
FULL TIME	59
PART TIME	13
NOT EMPLOYED	28
	100

OCCUPATION	%
PROF & BUSINESS	36
OTHER WHITE COLLAR	23
BLUE COLLAR	17
NON LABOR FORCE	22
	100

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	%
UNDER 15,000	12
15,000-34,900	31
35,000-44,900	16
45,000-59,900	15
60,000+	16

MARITAL	%
MARRIED	65
NOT MARRIED	35
	100

YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD = 21% N = 310

Even with the knowledge of statistical limitations it is very informative to examine the weighted percentages to obtain a good approximation of current District 502 characteristics. Additionally, when contrasted with currently enrolled COD students on comparable values, it appears our student body is not totally typical. For example, the COD female-male ratio is 60-40 while the district is about 52-48. Likewise, the district white/non-white ratio is 94-6, while COD is about 89-11. The disparity between age is quite marked. Note that one out of five district residents is 56 years or older while the corresponding proportion of COD students is 7%. COD enrolls 43% from North region municipalities, 19% from the East region, and 38% from the Southwest region, while the estimated population concentrations were projected at 43, 24, amd 33%'s respectively. The college does not have comparison figures for the remaining sample characteristics except individual municipality, but the latter will not be presented here.

Summary Findings

Each topic will be separately discussed, but again keep in mind the survey was administered as an integrated whole so some of the following tables are equally relevant in several sections. They will be referenced where appropriate.

1. Perceptions Of The College Role(s) In The Community

Much of the college mission is defined by legislative enactment and the C.O.D. Board of Trustees. However, it is important to ascertain just how the community served by the college views its functions. If they view its purpose differently it is direct implicatiions for curriculum planning, marketing, public information, strategic planning, etc. Respondent's were provided with a list of major functions offered by community colleges in general and asked to tell how important each was to them. Table 1 reports the results.

TABLE 1

COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNCTIONS (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

FUNCTION	IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW
PREPARE TO TRANSFER	96	4	
PROVIDE VOCATIONAL TRAINING	95	4	1
LEARN BASIC SKILLS	88	12	
PROVIDE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS	87	12	1
PERSONAL ENRICHMENT	83	17	
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT	81	18	1

The most significant function was to view community colleges as a place to prepare for transferring. This was followed very closely by occupational/vocational training. These findings were to be expected although the importance ratings were somewhat higher than anticipated. What was a little surprising was the public ranking of basic skills improvement above both personal and cultural enrichment. The latter both have higher public and positive visibility than the former so it was heartening to find out the public still views the improvement of basic skills as that important. It coincides with the current media blitz through project PLUS to raise national awareness about illiteracy in the U.S.A.

A corollary question asked how respondents viewed C.O.D. specifically.

TABLE 2

COMMUNITY VIEW OF COD (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

PLACE TO	%
OBTAIN C.O.D. DEGREE/CERT	14
EARN TRANSFER CREDIT	52
ACQUIRE NON-DEGREE SKILLS	25
DON'T KNOW	10

It appears District 502 residents see the college somewhat differently than they picture community colleges in general. Half said College of DuPage was the first two years toward a baccalaureate degree. One-fourth felt the college provided non-degree oriented courses and activities while only 13% viewed the college as a place to obtain a two-year occupational degree or certificate. Also one of each ten people did not know how to describe the college. It would appear worthwhile to learn more about this group to improve techniques for getting the college message to them.

2. Community Awareness Of COD And Its Competitors

The survey asked a series of questions about the District's awareness and familiarity with College of DuPage. Additionally, respondents were polled about their proclivity towards choosing an educational competitor. An introductory question asked for their general familiarity with C.O.D.

TABLE 3

FAMILIARITY WITH COD (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

FAMILIARITY	%
FAMILIAR	65
UNFAMILIAR	35
NEVER HEARD OF	1
	100

Two-thirds of those surveyed said they were either very or somewhat familiar. On the other hand, 36% were unfamiliar with or had never heard of C.O.D. Such a finding can be viewed either positively or negatively, depending upon one's predisposition. Two of every three people knew something about the college which is quite good when extrapolated to a district of 800 thousand people. However, one could have some concern that one of every three had minimal or no awareness of C.O.D. That could represent a substantial untapped target market.

TABLE 4

EVER TAKEN COURSE AT COD (%)

N = 679 S.E. = ± 4

RESPONSE	%
YES	53
NO	47
	100

A followup question inquired whether the interviewee had ever taken a course at College of DuPage. Note that only 679 persons responded, but 53% indicated they had enrolled in courses offered by C.O.D.

TABLE 5

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER ENROLLED AT COD (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

ENROLLED	%
YES	43
NO	56
DON'T KNOW	1
	100

Slightly more than 4 of every 10 persons surveyed said that some member of their household has taken courses from COD since it opened its doors. That is a substantial number of people considering the rapid population migration which has been occurring throughout the district. Even with such heartening news one should not lose sight of the fact that 56% of the households had never availed themselves of C.O.D.'s services. If the college considers its advertising strategies to aggressively seek inroads with this group the results could prove profitable. Specific means to reach these groups will be pointed out later.

As part of the inquiry respondents were asked to identify their primary reason for choosing either COD or one of its competitors. Tables 6 and 7 reveal their answers.

TABLE 6

REASONS FOR CHOOSING COD (%)

N = 698 S.E. = ± 5

REASON	% *
CONVENIENT LOCATION	69
GOOD REPUTATION	37
PROGRAM VARIETY	21
COST	16
CONVENIENCE (UNDEFINED)	7
OFFERING MEETS NEED	6
FAMILIARITY	5
GOOD SCHEDULE	5
QUALITY FACULTY	4
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED	4
PREFER TWO-YEAR COLLEGE	3
FACILITIES	3
GOING FOR DEGREE	1
OTHER	1
DON'T KNOW	2

* WILL SUM TO MORE THAN 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE ANSWERS COULD BE GIVEN

TABLE 7

REASONS FOR CHOOSING COMPETITOR (%)

N = 214 S.E. = ± 8

REASONS	% *
CONVENIENT LOCATION	41
BETTER PROGRAM	16
OFFER GRADUATE COURSES	13
FAMILIARITY	12
GOOD REPUTATION	11
OFFERING MEETS NEED	9
QUALITY FACULTY	8
COST	6
PREFER FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL	5
CONVENIENCE (UNDEFINED)	3
EMPLOYER FUNDED	3
OTHER	2
DON'T KNOW	2

* WILL SUM TO MORE THAN 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE ANSWERS COULD BE GIVEN

The vast majority said the college was conveniently located or offered classes close to their home. This was followed in distant order by college reputation, program variety, and low cost. The college, with justifiable reason, claims students select C.O.D. for good academic reasons but the people enroll essentially because it is close to home.

Likewise, competitors are also selected for convenient location but the pattern of reasons is somewhat different beyond that. Compare the rank position of reputation and cost between the two tables.

Overall it appears that C.O.D. is doing a good job in holding its own against its competitors. However, there does seem to be room for improvement in reaching more of the district with the college's message.

3. Perception Of Current College Services

In an effort to more specifically identify community awareness of COD services people were asked if they had either used or attended a variety of college-sponsored community services. Table 8 shows the results.

TABLE 8

USED/ATTENDED COD ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES (%)

N = 1504 S.E. = ± 3

ACTIVITY/SERVICE	ATTEND	NOT ATTEND	
CONCERT	17	83	= 100%
C.O.D. STAFF SPEAKERS	17	83	
ATHLETIC EVENTS	17	83	
ART EXHIBITS	15	85	
PLAYS/THEATRICAL	14	86	
OUTSIDE LECTURER	14	86	
USED ATHLETIC FACILITIES	9	91	
COMMUNITY GROUP MEETING	8	92	
NONE OF ABOVE	56	44	

The vast majority of respondents had not taken advantage of the various Fine Arts performances. Part of this could be attributable to unfamiliarity with the new Arts Center and limited publicity regarding upcoming events. People said the college facilities were conveniently located as far as attendance so one could assume commuting distance to the performance would not be a significant inhibiting factor. Only one community person in ten had used the new physical education/recreation facilities. Finally, 8% had used the college facilities to hold various community and professional meetings.

4. Importance Of Factors When Selecting An Educational Program

Everyone was asked to provide their main reason for thinking about taking any higher education coursework. Table 9 shows their reply.

TABLE 9

MAIN REASON FOR CONSIDERING COLLEGE (%)

N = 1226 S.E. = ± 3

REASON	%
PERSONAL INTEREST	33
IMPROVE JOB SKILLS	26
OBTAIN DEGREE/CERT.	18
ACQUIRE NEW JOB SKILLS	13
LEISURE/RECREATION	6
IMPROVE BASIC SKILLS	3
DON'T KNOW	1
	100

One-third said personal interest would be their primary motivation while one-fourth indicated current job skill improvement would be the triggering event. One in five would enter higher education to seek a degree or certificate. It is interesting, but not surprising, to note that 88% of the respondents said Learning Basic Skills was an important community college function (See Table 1) yet only 3% would admit that would be a primary factor influencing their return.

Once they decided to enter any college to pursue their educational goals they were asked to rate the importance of several criteria that influenced them to select a particular institution. Table 10 presents the findings.

TABLE 10

FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE SELECTION (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

SELECTION FACTOR	IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW
TEACHER QUALITY	98	2	
COURSES OF INTEREST	97	3	
EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES	95	5	
COLLEGE REPUTATION	91	9	
COURSES/SERVICES FOR ADULTS	90	10	
STUDENT ACADEMIC ABILITY LEVEL	79	20	1
CONVENIENT LOCATION	78	22	
COST	77	23	
CAREER COUNSEL/PLACEMENT	77	23	
H.S. ADVISOR RECOMMEND	49	49	2
FAMILY/PEER	42	57	1

The top five factors in stated order of importance were teacher quality, courses of interest, facilities/equipment, college reputation, and adult services. These results also confirm a notion long known to educators. People are more influenced by a college's facilities than by its academic reputation. It is also significant to note that cost was not considered a major factor in making a general college decision. This was reinforced when they chose C.O.D. (Table 6). Even though it was the fourth highest significant reason only 16% of the respondents gave it the highest priority. Note that people said the influence of high school advisors, family, peers, etc. was not nearly as significant as characteristics of the institution.

Then those individuals who had taken courses at COD were asked their main reasons for deciding to continue their education and ultimately selecting this college.

TABLE 11

MAIN REASONS FOR CONTINUE EDUCATION AT COD (%)

N = 679 S.E. = ± 4

MAIN REASONS	%
IMPROVE PRESENT JOB SKILLS	33
PERSONAL ENRICHMENT	22
PURSUE CAREER/PREPARE FOR EMPLOY	22
OBTAIN DEGREE/CERT	16
IMPROVE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE	16
LEISURE/RECREATION	7
OTHER	3
DON'T KNOW	1

* WILL SUM TO MORE THAN 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE ANSWERS COULD BE GIVEN

One-third of the previous students said they went to COD primarily to upgrade their current job skills. Another fifth chose COD for personal enrichment. More people said they came to the college for obtaining employment skills than for furthering their education or obtaining a degree which was translated as college transfer.

Now compare these reasons against Table 9. It seems people today are choosing any college, including COD, for personal enrichment or improving present job skills first and preparing for a new career second. The idea of seeking a degree or knowledge for its intrinsic worth and becoming an educated individual is much less important today. Taking coursework for leisure or recreational purposes rates low today, but figures to become a higher priority in the future as an aging but active population seeks to add quality activities to their later years.

5. Interest In Attending An Educational Program

In order to ascertain the district population interest and likelihood of seeking higher education in the future several brief questions on this topic were asked. They were first polled whether they had taken any college or trade school courses during the past 5 years.

TABLE 12

ANY COLLEGE/TRADE COURSES IN RECENT PAST (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

TAKING COURSES	%
CURRENT	10
ENROLLED DURING PAST 5 YEARS	32
NO COURSES DURING PAST 5 YEARS	57
DON'T KNOW	1
	100

Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated they had taken some formal instruction in either a college or trade school during the past five years. On the other hand, 57% had not done so. A followup question asked for the likelihood they would attend some college within the next five years.

TABLE 13

LIKELIHOOD OF COLLEGE ATTENDANCE WITHIN FIVE YEARS (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

LIKELIHOOD	%
LIKELY	64
UNLIKELY	36
	100

It was encouraging to learn that two of evey three persons interviewed said it was likely they would enroll in the near future. This is definitely a target market to profile and aggressively pursue. Then people were asked where they would most likely go to take courses within their local area.

TABLE 14

MOST LIKELY LOCATION TO TAKE COURSES (%)

N = 1226 S.E. = ± 3

INSTITUTION	%
COLLEGE OF DUPAGE	61
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	12
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY	5
PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	10
TECHNICAL/TRADE SCHOOL	1
OTHER	5
DON'T KNOW	6
	100

Of the 1226 who responded to this question 61% said they would take their coursework at COD. A distant 15% would attend an area public or private university. Actually one-third more chose COD than all other educational options combined. Any way this data is viewed College of DuPage stands out head and shoulders as the choice of District 502 residents.

TABLE 15

LIKELIHOOD OF ATTENDING COD (%)

N = 528 S.E. = ± 5

LIKELIHOOD	%
LIKELY	53
UNLIKELY	40
DON'T KNOW	7
	100

The previous question asked respondents in general where they would take courses if they planned to do so. Then they were asked the likelihood of taking the same courses at COD instead of the competitor they named before. Under conditions where both offered comparable services then 53% of those who selected a competitor said they would then opt for C.O.D. Clearly the college can hold its own with area competition if the public knows what it has to offer.

Once it was established the person was interested in attending college in the near future the next logical inquiry was to determine their general field of study.

TABLE 16

INITIAL STUDY FIELD (%)

N = 1226 S.E. = ± 3

FIELD OF STUDY	%
BUSINESS/DP/OFFICE	38
TECHNOLOGY	14
HUMANITIES/ARTS	13
HEALTH/HUMAN SERVICES	11
SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE	9
CONTINUING EDUCATION	6
MATHEMATICS/SCIENCES	4
OTHER	2
DON'T KNOW	2
	100

Their answers were reflective of the general economic and occupational trends today. It was previously established that people were focusing upon obtaining necessary job skills and entering the labor force. This table shows that people perceive their best opportunities lie in the Business, Data Processing, Office Careers and Technology fields. It also says COD must remain on top of emerging occupational trends in anticipation of career-training needs.

6. Obstacles To Attending COD

In order to encourage people to enroll at COD it is important to identify and minimize any college-controlled obstacles that discourage attendance.

TABLE 17

OBSTACLES TO ATTEND COD (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

OBSTACLE	SERIOUS	NOT SERIOUS	DON'T KNOW
CLASS SCHEDULE	53	45	2
WORK-COLLEGE CONFLICT	49	50	1
INSUFFICIENT TIME	46	53	1
COST	44	55	1
POST-COLLEGE JOB PLACEMENT	42	56	2
CLASS LOCATION	37	62	1
NOT PREPARED	31	67	2
LIMITED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	28	71	1
CHILD CARE AVAILABILITY	25	74	1
NOT FIT IN	14	86	
NONE OF ABOVE	13		

The data is arrayed in order of expressed seriousness by the respondents. Topping the list is the class schedule itself. This would include such things as times courses are offered, location, courses needed to meet graduation and job requirements, etc. When combined with the second most serious barrier which is a conflict between work and class schedules it is clear that flexible scheduling to meet the current lifestyles of District 502 is definitely a priority.

The remaining perceived obstacles need to be separately examined for separate subgroups by the college to determine what actions can be taken to remove them. Then the public must be informed to allay their concerns and increase the probability of enrolling.

7. Vocational And Career Interests And Need For A Career-Oriented Program

Several of the previous tables have shown consensus regarding the District desire for a curriculum and on-going programs designed for occupational and career-oriented needs. One of the survey questions asked people to signify just how important it was to have access to continuing education career-related experiences.

TABLE 18

IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION TO CAREER (%)

N = 1145 S.E. = ± 3

IMPORTANCE	%
IMPORTANT	66
UNIMPORTANT	34
	100

Underscoring the need for COD to provide such services 66% of the 1145 people who answered this question said these offerings were important to them. They are looking for courses or experiences which will rapidly enhance their employability.

8. Sources Of Information About The College

One underlying theme thus far has been the need for COD to effectively communicate its message to the district. In order to do that it is essential to learn what people turn to to learn about local news and, additionally, about the college.

TABLE 19

MAIN SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

NEWS SOURCE	%
DAILY NEWSPAPER	36
WEEKLY NEWSPAPER	24
PUBLIC TELEVISION	24
RADIO	12
CABLE TELEVISION	2
DON'T KNOW	2
	100

Not surprisingly, the majority relied upon their daily or weekly newspaper as the primary source of local news. One-fourth utilized public television and just over 10% got their information via radio. It is quite evident that people rely heavily upon the written word to obtain local news affecting their lives.

Once the individual indicated which communication medium they preferred they were asked to specifically identify the source they utilized. Tables 20 and 21 present their replies.

TABLE 20

NEWSPAPER SOURCES FOR LOCAL NEWS (%)

N = 937 S.E. = ± 4

NEWS SOURCE	%	NEWS SOURCE	%
CHICAGO TRIBUNE	34	WHEATON JOURNAL	2
SUN TIMES	11	THE VOICE	1
HERALD	7	WEST CHICAGO PRESS	1
SUBURBAN VOICE	5	PROGRESS	1
DAILY JOURNAL	4	THE DOINGS	1
DOWNERS REPORTER	4	WOODBRIDGE PROGRESS	1
NAPERVILLE SUN	4	VILLA PARK	1
ELMHURST PRESS	2	BOWLING BROOK SUN	1
AURORA BEACON	2	WESTMONT PROGRESS	1
GLEN ELLYN NEWS	2	OTHER	10
LOMBARDIAN	2	DON'T KNOW	1
			100

TABLE 21

RADIO/TELEVISION SOURCES FOR LOCAL NEWS (%)

N = 549 S.E. = ± 5

TV SOURCE	%
CHANNEL 7 - ABC(WLS)	21
CHANNEL 5 - NBC (WMAQ)	20
CHANNEL 2 - CBS (WBBM)	18
CABLE NEWS NETWORK (CNN)	3
CHANNEL 9 - (WGN)	3
CHANNEL 11 - (WTTW)	3
OTHER	4
SUBTOTAL	72

RADIO SOURCE	
WBBM	7
WGN	2
WXRT	2
WLUP	1
WLS	1
WMAQ	1
OTHER	14
SUBTOTAL	28
	100

The two dominant Chicagoland newspapers were the most utilized papers with the Tribune outdistancing the Sun Times three to one. The remaining local municipality papers accounted for the remaining 55% with each having a small percentage of the market. People made a clear distinction between 'local' local news and Chicagoland, state, national or international news. With such diversity it would appear no single newspaper source would effectively reach the majority of the district.

Turning to television and radio note that the three national networks account for almost 83% of the TV news sources alone among the 54% respondents. Radio stations combined for only 14% of the two media. People today much prefer to 'see' the local news rather than 'hear' it.

Finally, those interviewed were asked how they found out about COD's courses and services.

TABLE 22

INFORMATION SOURCES ABOUT COD (%)

N = 1272 S.E. = ± 3

INFORMATION SOURCE	% *
QUARTERLY/OPEN DOOR	74
C.O.D. STUDENT	60
FRIEND	56
C.O.D. CATALOG	50
NEWSPAPER	44
H.S. COUNSELOR/TEACHER	14
PARENT	11
RADIO ADS	9
EMPLOYER	9
NONE OF ABOVE	1

* WILL SUM TO MORE THAN 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE ANSWERS COULD BE GIVEN

People could give multiple responses. Not surprisingly, 74% identified the two college schedule publications as their primary source. Beyond that it was significant that 60% said another COD student was their source and 56% relied upon a friend. Less than half relied upon newspapers for news about COD, yet they sought the tabloid for most other area information (Table 20). Only one person in ten sought parental advice about C.O.D., but such results could be partially explained when one considers the average COD students is 30.9 years old. This person is already making independent decisions. In any event, people seek different sources for different kinds of information so COD needs to make maximum use of the mediums people expect to hear about the college in getting its message across.

9. Preferred Delivery Systems, Schedule, Location, Format

Earlier in this summary it was concluded that the public desired flexible scheduling to meet their busy lifestyles. Several questions were asked that either indirectly or directly attempted to ascertain this. First, those individuals who had previously attended COD were asked what field of study they pursued and where they took their coursework. Tables 23 and 24 reveal their responses.

TABLE 23

FORMER ENROLLEE FIELD OF STUDY (%)

N = 357 S.E. = ± 7

FIELD OF STUDY	%
BUSINESS/DP/OFFICE	37
HUMANITIES/ARTS	19
TECHNOLOGY	11
CONTINUING EDUCATION	8
MATHEMATICS/SCIENCES	8
SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE	7
HEALTH/HUMAN SERVICES	7
OTHER	2
DON'T KNOW	2
	100

TABLE 24

LOCATION OF COURSES - FORMER ENROLLEE (%)

N = 357 S.E. = ± 7

LOCATION	%
ON-CAMPUS	41
OFF-CAMPUS	25
COMBINATION	34
	100

The former students tended to take more courses off-campus than the on-off campus ratio of today's students. However, if those individuals who reported taking combination of locations were actually taking more courses on-campus, which is a distinct possibility then the proportions are quite similar. Likewise, their field of study was not significantly different from what they said they would prefer to take in the near future (Table 16). It is also quite similar to the declared intent of today's students. Therefore, it would appear that the COD curriculum structure is basically in concert with the educational needs of its patrons.

All respondents were asked about their awareness of the existence of off-campus courses and how convenient their location was.

TABLE 25

AWARENESS OF OFF-CAMPUS COURSES

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

AWARENESS	%
YES	65
NO	8
DON'T KNOW	27
	100

TABLE 26

LOCATION CONVENIENCE OF OFF-CAMPUS COURSES

N = 1020 S.E. = ± 4

CONVENIENT	%
YES	85
NO	8
DON'T KNOW	7
	100

One-third of all the people surveyed were unaware of the existence of off campus COD courses. Part of this could be due to their lack of interest in seeking further education. However, for those people who were aware of their existence fully 85% felt they were situated conveniently for easy access.

Everyone was also asked to indicate their day and time preferences if they ever wanted to take courses at COD. Table 27 shows their reply.

TABLE 27

COURSE DAY AND TIME PREFERENCE (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

PREFERENCE	%
WEEKDAY EVENINGS	60
WEEKDAYS	24
SATURDAYS	7
FRIDAY NIGHTS	2
SUNDAYS	2
NO PREFERENCE	3
DON'T KNOW	2
	100

Eighty-four percent preferred the weekdays and only eleven percent desired weekend courses. They also would rather take evening over daytime classes. They appear to be obviously accustomed to and satisfied with the traditional structure. The percentage of current day-evening enrollment at COD is 60 day and 40 % evening.

10. Rating COD On Various Factors E.G., Quality Of Instruction, Use Of Services, Meeting Educational Needs, Etc.

COD wished to sample public opinion to obtain their evaluation of the institution. First, they were asked if they found the courses challenging.

TABLE 28

COURSE CHALLENGE LEVEL (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

CHALLENGE LEVEL	%
CHALLENGING	61
NOT CHALLENGING	6
DON'T KNOW	33
	100

Since everyone was asked this question one can interpret the 'Don't Know' responses as those individuals who had not taken any COD classes. Of those remaining almost all felt their classes taxed their intellect. This coincides with evidence from other sources, such as subsequent performance of four-year transferees, feedback from employers, and other indices that COD students receive quality instruction.

Finally, Table 29 shows how those sampled rated the college on various characteristics.

TABLE 29

EVALUATION OF COD (%)

N = 1513 S.E. = ± 3

CHARACTERISTIC	EXCEL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW	
	RATING					
SERVES EDUC. NEEDS	37	37	6	1	19	= 100%
PREPARE FOR TRANSFER	29	38	6	1	26	
PREPARE JOB ENTRY/ADVAN	21	43	9	1	27	
QUALITY TEACH. FACULTY	19	40	6		35	
VARIETY OF COURSES	32	44	6	1	18	
COST OF CLASSES	19	42	11	1	27	
CONVENIENT CLASS LOCAT	31	40	12	5	12	
COURSE QUALITY	25	44	6		25	
CONVENIENT CLASS SCHEDULE	17	45	11	1	26	

Not surprisingly, COD has earned high marks from the district it serves. On every characteristic 60% of the ratings were either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. People obviously are quite pleased with the scope and quality of services COD provides. There are other empirical indicators which substantiate these ratings. The college has been growing in enrollment when most two- and four-year Illinois institutions are either remaining stable or declining. People are expressing a favorable vote with their dollars. Then, there is the recent accolade of being named among the top 20 leading innovators in higher education in the United States. The college received a full 10 year renewal of institutional accreditation by the North Central Association for Accreditation. The college has won numerous awards for its publications and on and on. While these are primarily internal indicators this survey has provided evidence that the people of District 502 also hold the college in high regard.

Conclusion

This report has provided a summary of the responses of 1513 District 502 residents regarding their educational needs and their image of COD. Overall, the people expressed very positive feelings about the college. It appears the college is anticipating their educational needs. One thing that appears needed is closer scrutiny of methods to inform the college of its services in a marketing sense.

Additional analyses will be performed on subgroups of this sample to focus upon specific needs of target groups that may be masked in these total statistics.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges JAN 15 1988